



## Religion – an obstacle to the Five-Year-Plan

anon.

late 1920s



On the left side of the poster there is a giant red worker in front of a red industrial city, swinging a large hammer against gray religious symbols such as the cross, the Bible and a Torah scroll. These are on the right side of the poster and are held in front of the worker by disembodied hands. Behind the symbols are equally gray religious buildings, churches and mosques. Above the image is the headline of the poster, "Religion slows down the five-year-plan!" Further to the right of the gray religious symbols is a yellow sign that strongly dominates the image due to its size. It reads, "Down with religious holidays! Join the League of Militant Atheists! Religion is a tool for the enslavement of the working people!" The statement is supported by the depiction of crossed-out religious scriptures such as the Bible, Quran and Torah. Below that is another poster, this time in blue, with the inscription, "All religions equally hinder and harm socialist construction! Fire over conciliatory attitude towards religion, over complacency and passivity in the fight against the class enemy!"

The poster comes from Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, and can be dated to the late 1920s or early 1930s. At that time, under Stalin, the industrialization of the country was massively advanced with the help of the first five-year plans and the class struggle was "intensified" in the same way. Religious institutions were also affected as class enemies and suffered from the intensification of anti-religious policies. From 1930 at the latest, churches and places of worship were closed or demolished on a large scale. This motif is also taken upon the poster: With its dialectical representation of the worker and the symbolically depicted religions, it polarizes between communist and church or religious values, portraying the latter as worth fighting against because they would hold back technical progress. It also promotes the League of Militant Atheists, a Soviet anti-religious association that existed between 1925 and 1947 and peaked in the 1930s with over five million members. Thus, the work can be classified as part of the Soviet regime's anti-religious propaganda during Stalin's early reign and his "completion of the revolution," the doctrine of which lasted until the brief paradigm shift during World War II.